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### Review Of "Government And Politics In Africa" By W. Tordoff

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subtle forms it suggests that military needs and perceptions were beginning, by the 1980s, to dominate political planning and economic development. There is plenty of evidence to suggest this was happening. Soldiers and policemen and government officials certainly sanctioned political murders and if Roherty had bothered to revise his text in the three years that have elapsed between completion and publication, he would have found confirmation of such actions in the official public record.

A host of minor inaccuracies accompany and accentuate the tendentious quality of the main narrative: there has never been a "Union Party" in South African politics and it was not "still intact" in 1975; the ANC did not have its headquarters in Kabwe; "Albie Jacks" is normally known as Albie Sachs; the Pan African Congress does not exist in South Africa, the organization referred to in the text is called the Pan-Africanist Congress. Joe Slovo was born in Lithuania, not Latvia, and since his election to the ANC's national executive in 1985 he has never ceased to belong to it, as is suggested in the text; Thabo Mbeki was not among the accused at the Rivonia Trial, that distinction belonged to his father, Govan; "Braam" Fischer spelled his first name "Bram" and at no time was he "head" of the South African Communist Party. Most of these minor errors are derived from Roherty's dependence on the South African strategic studies literature which he favors and with which he shares an abysmal ignorance of South African political institutions and political history.

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GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS IN AFRICA *By William Tordoff.* Second edition. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993. Pp. vii, 340. \$35.00 cloth, \$14.95 paper.

The second edition of William Tordoff's *Government and Politics in Africa* offers a state-of-the-art review of contemporary African politics. Tordoff's review of Africa's situation adeptly balances the two principal traditions in writings on African politics—modernization theory and underdevelopment theory. Scholars in these traditions, behavioral and Marxist-oriented, respectively, are clearly illuminated by Tordoff as providing mostly complementary rather than contradictory views.

Each of the ten chapters in his book is written with an economy of language and a breadth of knowledge rarely found in political science writings. They collec-

tively cover one after another of the central problems that emerge in contemporary African politics. Each chapter is followed by a valuable, selective list for additional readings.

This book will be most appreciated by and valuable to those who are already reasonably familiar with African politics, unfortunately. As a textbook, say one aimed toward those taking a beginning course with little or no previous knowledge of Africa, the book would serve as a monumental challenge. Most likely, such readers would be unable to access the rich arguments and illustrations woven throughout the text. This is because Tordoff ranges widely in citing instances to illustrate the problems he characterizes in each chapter. For example, under "Administration" or "The Military" (Chapters 6 and 7) Tordoff alludes to example after example which, though referring to countries discussed previously, do not provide enough context for the reader fully to appreciate the way in which the illustration makes the point. Students who began this book halfway through a semester—after having had an introduction to the history of half a dozen countries—would find it much more useful. At the other extreme, graduate students and teachers of African politics should consider this book close-to-required reading.

Each of the topics covered in the chapters of Tordoff's textbook grapples with a serious problem. Not every problem is faced squarely, however. After reviewing the complicated issues of colonialism and the rise of nationalism and independence, for example, Tordoff has a chapter on "State and Society." In this chapter he attempts to deal with the difficult issues of tribalism and racism. He sees these largely as the residue of social relations created prior to independence. Thus "ethnicity" as a social basis for politics involves traditional African culture as well as the legacy of colonialism; both affect the social context in which contemporary politics is played out. Given the importance of current efforts to increase "democracy" in Africa and the disintegration of order based on tribal conflicts, this chapter is the most disappointing one in the book. For example, Tordoff chooses to write in a most inaccessible manner about such issues. In one (perhaps unfairly selected) example he states: "In Zambia, as Robert Molteno has shown, the conflict between contemporary sectional political groups was non-traditional in nature. It was not possible to say that current conflicts reproduced and reflected historical conflicts" (p. 72).

Throughout the book Tordoff refuses to use the words "tribe" or "tribalism." Indeed, he almost completely avoids the use of the words "ethnic" or "ethnicity." With the raging conflicts in Somalia among various clans and sub-clans, with the tensions in Nigeria between Hausa and Yoruba, among others, and with the fragmentation in country after country in Africa between ethnic or tribal groups, this once-over-lightly on African cultural separation of identities into tribes, clans, and other social formations is disappointing to say the least. In contrast, Tordoff's chapters on political parties, administration, the military, and the prob-

lems of revolutionary ideology more often go straight to core elements. At least in those areas he does not tiptoe around African sensitivities in the way he does with respect to social relations and tribal conflict.

A second deficiency in the volume is the weakness of economic analysis. Tordoff recognizes fully the economic disasters that have befallen African countries since independence. Nevertheless, he does little to explicate the complicated relationships among policy, external economic circumstances, the workings of internal markets, and economic activity. Perhaps his saturation with British economists who eschew much of the World Bank's analysis has influenced his approach to these issues. In any event the book is saturated from time to time with such diffuse categories as socialism and capitalism in discussing economics' effects on politics—ideas that often have little or nothing to do with the actual economic performance in Africa or with government activities that have added to the collapse of economic progress in Africa. If one were interested in intellectual history, his analysis of economics would be a first-rate introduction. If one were interested in underlying relationships between politics and economics, however, based on the impact of administration, parties, political leaders, and the rule of law (all of which affect the economic environment within which economic activity takes place), one must be disappointed. In the last chapter, on "Ideology, the Post-Colonial State and Development," Tordoff redeems himself to a large extent by turning away from the largely anachronistic historical debate between modernization and underdevelopment schools of thought and lays out more clearly the kinds of political and economic dilemmas that are faced by contemporary Africans.

In sum, Tordoff's second edition is a thorough, up-to-date and well-written book. Teachers and advanced students of African politics should read *Government and Politics in Africa*. His interpretation of various strands of research is both insightful and provocative. As an introductory textbook, the work would require considerable supplementation for students to derive the available benefits from it. In spite of the modest attention he gives to the problem of ethnic conflict and the impact of economic forces (excluding class analysis) the volume is broad-ranging and up-to-date, especially with respect to the ineffectuality of political parties (in most places), the important role of the military, the difficulties of inter-African organizations, and the difficulties of nation-building. Tordoff's interpretations will be respected by scholars from diverse perspectives. It covers somewhat different ground from the other major textbook of merit: that by Naomi Chazan, Robert Mortimer, John Harbison, and Donald Rothchild, *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa* (2nd edition, 1992).

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